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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 002778

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KCOG](#) [KDEM](#) [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: CRIME(FIGHTING) DOESN'T PAY FOR BLOGGING POLICEMAN

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Susan Elliott for reasons 1  
.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Novorossisk police Major Aleksey Dymovskiy's November 5 and 10 online video postings, where he accused local police chiefs of illegal and immoral actions, has touched a raw nerve in Russia, where trust in police is already low. Police officials, human rights activists, and journalists have commented, for and against, Dymovskiy's actions and motives. More broadly, the event has shed light on the ability of President Medvedev, Prime Minister Putin, and others within the Ministry of Internal Affairs to implement anticorruption reforms. We are not in a position to comment on the authenticity of Dymovskiy's claims, but in either case, public trust in police in the short-term is likely to diminish further. End Summary.

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People Listen to the Blogosphere  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) On November 5 Major Dymovskiy posted two videos on his blog addressed to Putin in which he described a number of corrupt police practices in the southern Russian city of Novorossisk. Dymovskiy discussed the pressure to improve crime fighting statistics through illegal and immoral means, such as arresting those known to be innocent, falsifying evidence, and claiming that an officer is working when he was sick. He also noted inadequate compensation and difficult working conditions. Dymovskiy asked to meet with Putin to discuss these violations in more detail. Dymovskiy's postings were quickly picked up by mainstream media and his world crashed down around him. Oddly enough, Dymovskiy's blog was posted the same day as an interview by Moscow's recently hired Police Chief Vladimir Kolokoltsev, in which he discussed the need to increase public trust in and respect for police officers.

[1](#)3. (SBU) On November 9 Dymovskiy held a press conference in Krasnodar region and said that his life had been threatened and that he feared for his pregnant wife. He attempted to fly to Moscow that day but was briefly detained at the local airport, and when released, discovered that his debit card had been blocked and he could not buy an airline ticket. Dymovskiy decided to drive to Moscow instead. He held a press conference November 10 in Moscow, which happens to be "Police Day," in which he repeated the allegations and asked for a meeting with Putin.

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Blame Game Strikes Everyone, Including USAID  
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[1](#)4. (SBU) Two days after Dymovskiy's accusations surfaced, Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev ordered an investigation into Dymovskiy's claims. At the same time, Novorossisk Interior Department Head Valeriy Medvedev called for an

investigation into Dymovskiy's statements as a crime for slandering his police colleagues. Krasnodar region authorities soon thereafter determined that Dymovskiy's accusations were false and began formally investigating him for libel. On November 9, Interior Ministry Spokesman Oleg Yelnikov said that Krasnodar region Interior Department Chief Sergey Kucheruk had fired Dymovskiy for falsely accusing fellow officers.

15. (C) Interfax quoted a source within the Interior Ministry who said that Dymovskiy's actions were a public relations stunt by the U.S. to discredit Russia. The source implied that Dymovskiy was working on behalf of the U.S. since he was somehow connected to a Novorossisk human rights organization that had allegedly received money from the Southern Regional Resource Center (SRRRC) in nearby Krasnodar, which in turn had received funding from USAID. Director of Grant Programs for the SRRRC told us that SRRRC had never given a grant or any other financial support to the Novorossisk human rights organization in question.

16. (C) Novaya Gazeta journalist for the Southern Federal District Yevgeniy Titov said that Dymovskiy's story was difficult to confirm, but Dymovskiy probably had either a mental breakdown due to fatigue, was the tip of the iceberg within an unhappy police force, or was being used as a pawn to force a shakeup within the elite of Novorossisk or Krasnodar region. Krasnodar region human rights ombudsman Aleksandr Kozitskiy told us that Dymovskiy had not appealed to them for assistance, but doubted that he was a "fighter for justice." Kozitskiy added that Dymovskiy's actions were more likely for personal gain or a result of mental problems.

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Russian media also reported that one of the doctors Dymovskiy accused of collaborating with Novorossisk authorities had denied Dymovskiy's allegations and suggested that he showed psychopathic tendencies.

17. (SBU) Many, but not all, human rights activists supported Dymovskiy's right to discuss his claims. Head of the NGO For Human Rights Lev Ponomaryov stated that Dymovskiy called him to ask for help, and that Ponomaryov replied that he would bring a level of protection to the ten-year veteran of the police force by helping to publicize his claims. Other anti-regime figures such as Yuliya Latynina, however, have written that Dymovskiy should not have spoken publicly, and that he should have quit long ago if he had problems with the way the police department was run.

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Comment  
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18. (C) Medvedev and Putin have yet to comment on the case, and some observers have suggested that Dymovskiy had created an awkward situation that the tandem would need to discuss jointly before speaking publicly, if either one of them spoke at all. Putin, as the de facto leader of the security services, was the go-to person on these types of matters. Medvedev, however, had pushed anticorruption strongly as one of his key priorities for Russia, including most recently in his November 12 speech to the nation. Dymovskiy's direct blog address to Putin is seen by many here that the police officer, like most other observers, viewed Putin as the tandem member who can resolve problems. Officials' knee-jerk reaction in firing Dymovskiy before knowing and fully investigating his accusations has only compounded the public relations problem the country's police force has suffered from for years. Whatever happens on the elite level, public confidence in police officers could decrease whether the accusations are confirmed, found to be false, or like most criminal investigations, linger on unresolved.  
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